



**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney  
District of New Hampshire*

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release  
June 17, 2004**

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**LOCAL OFFICIALS TEAM UP WITH NATIONAL LEADERSHIP TO REDUCE GUN  
CRIME IN OUR COMMUNITY**

***Federal Gun Crime Prosecutions Hit Record Highs, While Violent Crime Rate  
Hits 30-Year Low***

**CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE** - United States Attorney Tom Colantuono, Assistant U.S. Attorney Clyde Garrigan, NH State Police Major Barry Hunter, NH Attorney General's Criminal Justice Program Specialist Karen Jensen, Manchester Police Chief John Jaskolka, Hillsborough County Attorney Marguerite Wageling, Eastlantic Advertising President and PSN's Media Partner Franne Ciriello, and University of New Hampshire Professor and Research Partner Jack Humphrey, PhD, made up New Hampshire's eight-person delegation that attended the national Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) conference held in Kansas City, Missouri, on June 16 and 17, 2004.

Attorney General John Ashcroft spoke to over 1,150 federal, state, and local prosecutors, law enforcement officials, community leaders, and other members of the PSN teams from across the nation who convened to discuss the Department of Justice's ongoing efforts to reduce and prosecute gun crime. PSN is President Bush's comprehensive initiative to combat gun crime in America by providing locally-based programs with the tools and resources they need to succeed. It is the second highest priority of the Department of Justice, second only to terrorism.

"Through Project Safe Neighborhoods' unprecedented partnership of state, local, and federal leaders, we are turning the tide on gun crime," said Attorney General John Ashcroft. "We are taking gun-wielding criminals off our streets. The last three years represent a record of great success, but working together, we can do even more to make our neighborhoods safe."

"Our office is committed to the aggressive prosecution of the federal firearms laws as mandated by the 'Project Safe Neighborhoods' initiative. Keeping firearms out of the

hands of convicted felons, unlawful drug users, and convicted domestic violence abusers are some of our main objectives. This office will continue to vigorously enforce the federal firearms laws as we expand the implementation of Project Safe Neighborhoods in the District of New Hampshire,” said U.S. Attorney Tom Colantuono.

**Federal Gun Crime Prosecutions Have Increased Significantly Every Year Under Project Safe Neighborhoods.** From FY 2000 to FY 2003, federal firearms prosecutions increased by 68%. In FY 2003, the Justice Department filed over 10,500 federal firearms cases--the highest number ever recorded by the Department. The number of defendants charged with federal gun crimes rose from approximately 10,600 to over 13,000 from FY 2002 to FY 2003, a record increase of almost 23%. These figures are the highest on record in a single year since the Department began recording this information. In FY 2003, nearly all — 93% — of convicted defendants, who were originally charged with federal firearms offenses, were sentenced to some time in prison for convictions on firearms charges or other charges. 72% were sentenced to more than three years in prison, and over half of all defendants convicted were sentenced to more than five years in federal prison. State and local prosecutions have also increased.

**Project Safe Neighborhoods Is Working In New Hampshire.** U.S. Attorney Tom Colantuono, working side by side with state and local law enforcement, prosecutors and other community leaders, has created a PSN strategy to fit the unique gun crime problem in New Hampshire. Criminals who use guns are prosecuted under federal, state, or local laws, depending on which jurisdiction can provide the most appropriate punishment.

Since the implementation of Project Safe Neighborhoods in May 2003, federal firearms prosecutions in this district have increased by 100% and gun crime convictions have tripled and resulted in a number of important prosecutions. United States Attorney Tom Colantuono has stated that outlaw motorcycle gangs are a significant organized crime threat to the citizens of New Hampshire.

A good example of applying PSN to this problem is United States v. Charles Braid. On July 27, 2003, Gilford (NH) police officers observed a .45 caliber Ruger pistol in the defendant’s truck during the Hells Angels World Run. Mr. Braid was a prospective member (“prospect”) of the New Hampshire chapter of the Hells Angels, who was providing security for the event. It was later determined that Mr. Braid was a convicted felon in Massachusetts. Through the cooperative efforts of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE), the New Hampshire State Police, the Gilford Police Department, the Belknap County Attorney’s Office and the United States Attorney’s Office, the defendant was arrested and the firearm recovered. Mr. Braid pled guilty to an information charging him with being a felon in possession on November 3, 2003. He was sentenced to two (2) years imprisonment on January 27, 2004. He was ordered not to associate with motorcycle gang members with felony convictions as a condition of his two years of supervised release. This was the only significant incident during the World Run, and is an excellent example of the cooperative law enforcement effort that PSN promotes.

Another example, was the successful prosecution of R. Stephen Dodge, president

(at the time) of the Laconia Hells Angels. Dodge was arrested while traveling in a car with three other individuals, two of whom were armed. While both of his armed companions had gun permits, Dodge had a prior federal felony conviction for methamphetamine trafficking. Dodge waived indictment, pled guilty, and was sentenced to two years in federal prison and two years of supervised release. Present and former New Hampshire members of the Outlaws Motorcycle Club, the Ku Klux Klan Motorcycle Club, the HD Riders Motorcycle Club, and the Diablos Motorcycle Club have also been successfully prosecuted for violations of federal gun laws under PSN. These convictions send a very public message to other members of outlaw motorcycle gangs that they will be arrested, convicted, and will serve federal prison time if they are prohibited from having a weapon and nonetheless choose to possess one. In April 2003, a gun shop was burglarized in the northern part of the state, while two pipe bombs were set off as diversions. Eight handguns were stolen. This office and BATFE worked closely with the local police department to successfully investigate the case. All eight guns were recovered including one from Montana and one in New York state. The main target was a seventeen year old; an adult under New Hampshire law but a juvenile under federal law. In conjunction with the Grafton County Attorney, the case is being prosecuted in state court. New Hampshire's PSN Coordinator was cross-designated as a Special County Attorney and partner with the County Attorney in prosecuting this case in state superior court.

In a more recent case, Kevin Boulais, a previously convicted felon, entered a guilty plea to an information charging him with being a felon in possession of a firearm. According to a Criminal Complaint on the charge issued by the U.S. District Court, state and local police officers seized a 10 gauge shotgun from Boulais' home on August 8, 2002. As a convicted felon, Boulais is prohibited from possessing firearms. As a felon with three or more felonies related to crimes of violence or drug trafficking, Boulais was sentenced under the federal Armed Career Criminal Act. On May 27, 2004, Boulais was sentenced to 8 years, 4 months imprisonment followed by a 5-year period of supervised release.

The U.S. Attorney's Office has successfully prosecuted federal firearms cases investigated by many of New Hampshire's local police departments, including Nashua, Manchester, Portsmouth, Concord, Laconia, and Dover, among others. Local police departments are requesting federal prosecution of their firearms cases at unprecedented levels.

**Project Safe Neighborhoods Has Contributed to Decreasing the Violent Crime Rate to Its Lowest Levels in 30 Years, But Reducing Gun Crime Remains an Important Goal.** The violent crime rate is now at its lowest level since 1973, when the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics started collecting criminal victimization data. The violent crime rate for the first two years of the Bush Administration (2001-2002) was nearly 21% lower than for 1999-2000. In 2001-2002, the per capita number of violent crimes *involving firearms* has dropped 14% from 1999-2000. There were approximately 64,000 fewer gun crimes and approximately 12% (almost 130,000) fewer victims of gun crime in 2001-2002, than in 1999-2000.

**Project Safe Neighborhoods Takes a Multifaceted Approach to Reducing Gun Crime.** Gun crime reduction is President Bush's top domestic justice initiative, and the

Bush Administration has devoted over \$1 billion to Project Safe Neighborhoods in its first four years (FY 2001 to FY 2004). The funds have been used to hire new federal, state, and local prosecutors, provide training, hire research and community outreach support, and develop and promote effective prevention and deterrence efforts. Each of the 94 federal judicial districts engages in deterrence and prevention efforts through community outreach and media campaigns and ensures that law enforcement and prosecutors have the training they need.

The PSN conference is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice. To find out more about PSN and its local programs visit the PSN website at [www.psn.gov](http://www.psn.gov).

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